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Naphakdeizwe

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The **Ubukhosi Naphakadeizwe** (Naphaomutu Language: *Empire of the Eternal Land*, literal translation: *union of peoples of the land that endures*), also known as **Zulthwe** (Zulthi: *Land of the Sky*, pronounced and written as Zulthwa by foreigners from neighboring countries), **Umhoph-we** (Abantubomoyan: *Land of the Center*), among many other names, is a vast territory located south of Ofir and Zangvebar, in the western-central region of the deepest reaches of the Far South of the Old Continent.

It is inhabited by a multitude of human ethnic groups under the rule of a ubuk-nya, literally a "*union of interests*," which functions as a hybrid between an oligarchy and an empire in the most traditional sense of the word.

Contents

1. History
   1.1. Very Ancient Times
   1.2. The Arrival of Humans and the Origins of Ethnic Groups (230s

Naphakdeizwe

General information

Variation(s)	• Zulthwe • Zulthwa (by foreigners) • Umhoph-we • Many more
Status	Ubuk-nya (a oligarchic dynamiscracy, with certain "democratic" elements as well an empire due to how it works and the union of different peoples under one banner)
Ruler	Umbusi

Societal information

Official Language	• Ukuxhumana (main) • Naphaomutu Language • Zulthi • Abantubomoyan

B.R — 4 A.R)
1.3. Rise of the Coastal Kingdoms (4–870s A.R.)
1.4. Birth of the Ubukhosi Naphakadeizwe (870s–890s A.R.)
1.5. Formation of the Current Borders (900s–960s A.R.)
1.6. The Invasion of the Amapaba Basin (11th century A.R.)
1.7. The Great Council of Amanziumu (Mid-11th century A.R.)
1.8. Contact with Barsa (Early 12th century A.R.)
1.9. The Conflict with the Izilumko-Ezizinzileyo (Mid-12th century A.R.)
1.10. The Raids of the Aen Fomuire (Late 12th century A.R.)
1.11. The Revolutions of the Amapaba Basin (Late 12th century A.R.)
1.12. The War Against the Great Sea (Early 13th century A.R.)
1.13. The Expedition of Nomasonto Khathi (Mid-13th century A.R.)
1.14. The Fall of the Kingdom of Zangvebar and the Role of Naphakadeizwe (1279–1300s A.R.)
1.15. Late 14th Century Onwards
2. International Relations
3. Climate
4. Culture
4.1. Art
4.2. Alchemy
4.3. Architecture
4.4. Army
4.5. Calendar
4.6. Capital

- Many more

- 4.7. Clothing
- 4.8. Coat of Arms
- 4.9. Coming of Age
- 4.10. Currency
- 4.11. Daily Life
- 4.12. Diet
- 4.13. Discrimination
  - 4.13.1. Non-humans
  - 4.13.2. Racism
- 4.14. Education
- 4.15. Family
- 4.16. Government
- 4.17. Hairstyles
- 4.18. Jewelry
- 4.19. Language
- 4.20. Magic
- 4.21. Marriage
- 4.22. Mentality
- 4.23. Pets
- 4.24. Religion
- 4.25. Society
  - 4.25.1. Social Structure
- 4.26. Symbols
- 4.27. Justice
- 4.28. Slavery
- 4.29. Tattoos
- 4.30. Transport
- 4.31. Women’s Rights and Sexual Minorities
- 4.32. Other Cultural Traits

5. Demographics
   - 5.1. People
6. Economy
7. Flora and Fauna
8. Geography
9. Naming Conventions
   - 9.1. Examples of Male Names
   - 9.2. Examples of Female Names
   - 9.3. Examples of Gender-Neutral Names

10. Notable Locations
  10.1. Academies
  10.2. Basins
  10.3. Cities
  10.4. False Cities
  10.5. Mountain Ranges
  10.6. Outposts
  10.7. Towns
  10.8. Valleys
  10.9. Villages
  10.10. Waterfalls
11. Notable Organizations
  11.1. Guilds
12. Notable People
  12.1. Ethnic Groups
  12.2. Designers
  12.3. Sailors
  12.4. Umbusis
13. Notes
14. Trivia

History

Very Ancient Times

Long before the emergence of any civilization, what is now the coast of Naphakadeizwe was an area of intense volcanic activity. At some point during this period, its main volcanoes grew so large that they collapsed in on themselves, leaving behind what would later become vast basins surrounded by mountains located relatively close to one another.

The Arrival of Humans and the Origins of Ethnic Groups (230s B.R — 4 A.R)

Humans appeared in the region, as in most places in the world, with the First Conjunction of the Spheres in the 230s B.R. Not much is known about how they arrived, but the common myths of the different ethnic groups claim that their ancestors crossed *the Gate* in order to avoid death during the "*End of the Old*

Gods." Whether this gate refers to the Ard Gaeths—the massive portals (technically nodes) that allow entire populations to cross through the multiverse and which closed after the First Conjunction—is unknown, although it seems likely. If so, the claims of the elf Avallac'h that humans destroyed their world of origin gain some degree of support.

After this, the ancestors of the current ethnic groups settled in a tribal manner until they reached the coast, losing many along the way due to the monsters brought by the First Conjunction. There, they found a relatively safer place, and the first cities began to emerge.

Groups that were nearly driven to extinction, lacking sufficient numbers to recover once they reached the region, were forced to merge with others, thus giving rise—over the centuries—to the groups that now inhabit the country, more specifically around the 4th century After the Resurrection according to the Nordling calendar.

Rise of the Coastal Kingdoms (4–870s A.R.)

With the settlement of the various tribes, a series of rival coastal kingdoms gradually emerged in the region, competing for territory and influence. This internal focus was so intense that contact with the outside world remained practically nonexistent.

The main difference compared to the Zangvebarian coastal city-states was that the region was safer and more habitable. As a result, it allowed for less reliance on trade, fostering more closed, protectionist economies that were less dependent on others, but at the same time led to increased territorial conflicts. This situation also drew the attention of a power at the time—the Empire of South Oshan—which sought to incorporate the region into its domain due to its relative security.

Birth of the Ubukhosi Naphakadeizwe (870s–890s A.R.)

Naphakadeizwe is a relatively ancient nation in the Far South, having emerged in the final phases of the Oshan Empire, as previously mentioned. At that time, the empire—divided into North Oshan and South Oshan—began its decline toward complete extinction (with South Oshan surviving as an empty shell, an empire in name only, and later a vassal of Ofir).

Naphakadeizwe did not arise as part of South Oshan, but rather as a union of

cultures that had been influenced by the empire to varying degrees. Fearing that South Oshan might expand into their territories in an attempt to survive as an empire, these cultures united under a single banner. In order to avoid the mistakes and eventual decadence of Oshan, they developed a shared structure and a different, relatively flexible system of government, based on their own prior social frameworks.

All of this was made possible thanks to the diplomat and first umbusi, Mandlenkosi Gwala of the Naphaomotu, one of the groups closest to the territories of South Oshan. He was able to experience firsthand both the virtues and the flaws of the empire, having studied there for a time as part of his diplomatic training, as his father was a native of that empire.

As a result, he soon decided to unify the neighboring groups under a single banner in just twenty years—not through conflict, but through diplomacy. This is why it is referred to as a "*union of interests,*" as previously mentioned. These shared interests included stronger defense, continued survival, and many others.

Formation of the Current Borders (900s–960s A.R.)

Taking advantage of the chaos affecting South Oshan and the emergence of successor states—such as the Empire of Mzaliwa wa Usiku in what is now Zangvebar—the rulers who succeeded Mandlenkosi Gwala carried out a justified expansion with the aim of creating a buffer zone against the surrounding instability. They advanced inland, using the ethnic groups closest to these areas as the spearhead of this expansion, thereby establishing the borders the country holds today.

In the process, they also contributed to the collapse of Mzaliwa wa Usiku, the rise of Zangvebar, the first contact between both states, and the extension of their borders to the southern edge of what is now Ofir.

These borders have remained relatively unchanged throughout the ages.

The Invasion of the Amapaba Basin (11th century A.R.)

Approximately a century before the revolutions that would overthrow the clerical class of its city-states, the people of the Amapaba Basin suffered an attempted conquest by the Ubukhosi Naphakadeizwe, which at the time was under the rule of the ambitious umbusi Tulani Buthelezi. She believed that the buffer zone should extend further—that they were superior and should spread

their system of government and flexible social structure beyond their current borders to the rest of the world.

This vision had the support of her council at the time, leading to the planning of objectives and eventually to military campaigns, thus initiating first contact with the Basin. The Amapaba region was chosen as the initial target due to its proximity, as well as its composition of city-states, which appeared easier to conquer.

However, what the people of Naphakadeizwe did not anticipate was the tenacity and fervor of the Amapabans. This ultimately led to the failure of the invasion, as their religious leaders inspired the population to continue fighting to the point of exhaustion.

The defeat was devastating. Due to their belief in their own superiority, they suffered such a crushing loss that much of their navy was destroyed. Additionally, Cabanga Myeni—the creator of their finest war naval designs—died during one of the battles, taking her knowledge with her, as she was young and had not yet documented it.

This loss later allowed Zangvebar to surpass them in naval capabilities, and Naphakadeizwe's fleet gradually shifted toward a more commercial focus. This change was also intended to avoid retaliation from the Amapabans by offering them goods they needed.

This strategy proved effective, as from that point onward the two maintained diplomatic relations—tense, primarily commercial, but relations nonetheless.

It is also worth noting that the defeat was so severe that it reshaped their military philosophy. Their armament evolved into a defensive-offensive model, transforming the country into a weapons-producing power precisely to prevent such a defeat from happening again. This led to the development of serrated shields and other distinctive weapons that would later be exported for large sums of money.

The Great Council of Amanziumu (Mid-11th century A.R.)

One of the greatest consequences of the failed invasion of the Amapaba Basin was, due to the religiosity shown by the invaded peoples, a crisis of faith that nearly brought down the empire. As a result, priests from the various religions within the empire began preaching against the government and inciting

uprisings here and there.

Fortunately, these uprisings were contained in time and remained small in scale, as the umbusi of the time, Sithembile Dlamini, acted swiftly to address the problem.

This was done by summoning the priests for negotiations—only to imprison them in a palace chamber without food or water, under the condition that they would be released only once they had resolved their religious differences. After four days, they succeeded, and also swore not to speak against the empire again due to the ordeal they had endured.

All of this ultimately led to the emergence of a "*religion of religions*," or umbrella religion, for the country.

Contact with Barsa (Early 12th century A.R.)

By the beginning of the century, technological development allowed Naphakadeizwe's merchant ships to reach as far as the region of Barsa, more specifically the central taifas. They established trade relations with them as regularly as certain "*Beyond the Seas*" merchants did in Nordling lands. This led to the adoption, among many ethnic groups, of loose-fitting clothing styles, particularly due to garments imported from Barsa.

Additionally, they left a physical legacy in that region, as some of their ships—while capable of making the journey there—were unable to return. This added further layers to the vast, complex, and distant region.

The Conflict with the Izilumko-Ezizinzileyo (Mid-12th century A.R.)

By the 12th century, the empire would experience firsthand the consequences of an invasion, due to the forced migration of a collective of tribes later known as the Izilumko-Ezizinzileyo, who had lost unknown conflicts in the south. Believing the political entity to be fragmented due to its unique nature, they chose to attack rather than negotiate, with the intention of strengthening themselves.

Unfortunately for them, this fragmentation was only apparent, and before long the empire responded, defeating them and driving them out.

This did not lead to their extermination, however, due to the ferocity with which they had fought—something the Naphakadeizians found useful. This led to an

agreement whereby, with the empire's assistance, the tribal collective was able to win the aforementioned conflicts and recover their territory. This is the origin of the name given to them.

As a result, trade relations were established between them, and as a secondary benefit, due to the aid provided, the empire (as any empire eventually does) came to possess an area of influence beyond its borders—limited and almost unnoticed, but an area of influence nonetheless.

The Raids of the Aen Fomuire (Late 12th century A.R.)

By the end of the century, the Aen Fomuire—the degenerate descendants of the once Aen Taoide, the *People of the Tide*, the *Tide Folk* (that is, the ancient sea elves, now the elves of the undersea)—set their sights beyond the coasts of Ofir and Zangvebar. Continuing their tradition of disguising themselves as sea monsters to attack the surface, they began raiding the empire's territories.

This led to further development of defensive-offensive military technology and to the people of Naphakadeizwe turning their attention toward Zangvebar, as that region was more accustomed to such attacks. This, in turn, improved relations between the two, something that would prove key, at least for the future of the neighboring country.

Additionally, and unfortunately due to non-consensual relations, half-elves were born. Fortunately for many of them, however, thanks to their efforts, they did not suffer the discrimination found in other regions.

The Revolutions of the Amapaba Basin (Late 12th century A.R.)

By the end of the 12th century, most of the Amapaban city-states faced socialist revolutions against the tyranny of antherion-worshipping priests and their puppet rulers. While empowering for society, these revolutions were not without unnecessary bloodshed and cruelty.

One of the consequences was the initial blockade of the Amapaban delta by Ofieri and Hannuan fleets, as the rulers of these countries sought to punish the Amapabans for disruptions in trade. The Zangvebari, in turn, sided with Amapaba, seeing similarities with their own past under Aen Nílfe occupation, though they disapproved of the Basin's new "*dwarf-like*" socialist economic system.

For its part, Naphakadeizwe—already suffering from the unexpected raids of the Aen Fomuire—decided to support its neighbors (both the Basin and Zangvebar) in order to gain their favor. It did so by supplying weapons to the Amapabans and, at the same time, offering its services to the Ofieri, Hannuans, and Zangvebarians as a guarding force to prevent alternative routes that could bypass the blockade, while continuing its role as an arms supplier.

Being the only power engaged in this dual role allowed it to grow wealthy enough to further improve its already advanced military technology, as well as its architecture, thereby reducing the impact of attacks by the People of the Undersea.

This did not come without cost: Naphakadeizwe lost control of several islands along its own coast, which became independent due to the reallocation of resources toward more strategically important areas and the arming of revolutionary groups in the Amapaba Basin. This caused enough local dissatisfaction—due to the lack of protection—to lead to their secession.

The War Against the Great Sea (Early 13th century A.R.)

At the beginning of the century, what historians would later call the War Against the Great Sea took place. In this conflict, the empire—supported logistically and through intelligence by Zangvebar and the city-states of Amapaba—brought an end to the raids of the Aen Fomuire, which had been mitigated but not stopped.

This was achieved through the Trap of Buywawa, in which the elven fleet was surrounded after a false city had been constructed and used as bait. Presented as the target of a major raid—Buywawa—it successfully lured the fleet in, leading to its subsequent destruction. This resulted, effectively, in the extinction of these forces.

However, due to the loosely anarchic structure of the undersea elves—with a sea king or sea queen acting as supreme commander during larger raids—it is likely that other groups survived the massacre. Given the vastness of the Great Sea, they may simply have ceased to be a problem in the region but not in others.

The Expedition of Nomasonto Khathi (Mid-13th century A.R.)

By the middle of the century, the izimpawu-umenzi turned sailor, Nomasonto Khathi, inspired by Zangvebarian accounts of the "*people in black*" (the Nilfgaardians) and the "*pale people*" (the Nordlings), decided—with financial support

from the Abenzi beeNdlela zaManzi (*makers of the water paths)*, one of the most important seafaring guilds of the empire—to undertake an expedition to those lands in order to expand the horizons and influence of her country.

The expedition never returned, becoming one of the nation's greatest mysteries. However, rumors (particularly in neighboring Zangvebar—and considering the design of the merchant vessels, which required multiple stops in ports such as those of Ofir) suggest that the expedition reached as far as Nazair shortly after its conquest. There, it is said to have been captured by the forces of the Nilfgaardian general Ardal aep Dahy, who believed they were supplying weapons to rebel factions. He imprisoned both Nomasonto and her crew.

Years later, during the search for Cirilla of Cintra, he mockingly suggested that if the Emperor could not find the heiress, he might as well present an empress of Zerrikanian or Zangvebarian origin—an allusion to Nomasonto's arrival in lands once considered Nordling and her continued imprisonment, having been mistaken by the general as someone from one of those regions.

The Fall of the Kingdom of Zangvebar and the Role of Naphakadeizwe (1279–1300s A.R.)

During this period, the neighboring kingdom of Zangvebar experienced a series of internal conflicts known as the Era of Red Waters. These conflicts came to an end at the beginning of the new century, when the kingdom was reformed into a confederation.

Naphakadeizwe's role during this time was straightforward, similar to its involvement during the Amapaba Basin revolutions: it acted as an arms supplier. However, under the rule of another ambitious umbusi, Nhlanhlayakhe Ndlela—this time one who sought to annex Zangvebar if the opportunity arose (and having learned from the failed invasion of Amapaba and the later arming of its revolutionary groups)—weapons were supplied not to a single faction, but to all of them. The objective was to weaken the country so severely that, once the conflicts ended, annexation would be effortless, supported by both accumulated wealth and prior promises.

However, events did not unfold as planned. The heavy outward focus of production led to a repetition of past mistakes. After more than two decades, once Queen Makeda rose to power and reformed the country as mentioned, she refused to honor the promises made, citing national security concerns (despite the new status quo of concord).

As a result, this neighboring nation subtly occupied part of the Zangvebarian border—specifically the Naphakadeizan frontier, the northernmost and one of the least populated regions of the empire—as a warning of what could happen if further intervention took place. This led to yet another territorial loss. It was not particularly large, nor did it spark independence movements, but rather stemmed from simple neglect.

No open conflict erupted, due to a combination of factors: allocating resources to reclaim the border could have led to internal collapse through neglect, and both the islands independence at the end of the previous century and the occupation itself were taken as omens that it was better not to escalate the situation.

Late 14th Century Onwards

From the late 14th century onwards, Naphakadeizwe gained greater regional influence alongside the cities of Amapaba, as the Zangvebarian Confederation became increasingly focused on competing with Nilfgaard and the Northern Kingdoms in the colonization of the Western Continent. In fact, Naphakadeizwe managed to recover its lost northern frontier, as Zangvebar committed a similar mistake—this time by focusing too much on lands beyond the Great Sea.

International Relations

International relations are primarily maintained with some peoples located even further south, Zangvebar, and the Amapaba Basin, as well as the southern regions of Ofir due to their shared borders. On occasion, contact has reached as far as Barsa, though this is as rare as a Melukkan traveling to the Northern Kingdoms.

As for the western coast, the Nilfgaardians are only scarcely informed of the empire's existence, knowing of it mainly through second-hand accounts, particularly from the Zangvebarians—whether through commercial ships that visit that empire, imperial ships that travel to Zangvebar, or Zangvebarian diplomats within imperial territory.

On the other hand, the Nordlings know virtually nothing. The few commercial ships that have reached Zangvebar tend to return with highly exaggerated tales of that land and what lies further south, to the point that their version of events

bears little resemblance to reality. As such, whatever they might "*know*" is little more than pure fiction.

Beyond its established relations with other countries and regions, the Naphakadeizians maintain certain ties with a collective of southern nomadic tribes, whom they refer to as the Izilumko-Ezizinzileyo (Stagnant Wise Ones). These relations are primarily commercial in nature, specifically within the tertiary sector, and more precisely involve mercenary services.

Climate

The climate of the territory is primarily characterized as humid tropical. In that sense, it is not very different from that found in southern Zangvebar.

Culture

Art

The most important arts in the empire are music—primarily through wind instruments—and sculpture. The prominence of wind instruments is due to the coastal environment, where music originated through the use of seashells and later evolved. Other arts are present, but not as prominent as in other regions.

Music, unlike in the North or in Nilfgaard, is not dominated by bards or similar figures, but by the UMkroli-weZandi (sculptors of sound). These are musician-sculptors who preserve music by, as their name suggests, creating it through the sculpting of instruments and spontaneous improvisation. They produce music in an unplanned manner through pleasant, random sound patterns that, regardless of form, generate logical sonic structures. Afterwards, they attempt to understand how the piece was created in order to preserve it for posterity. The same process applies to the vocal aspect and, therefore, to lyrics.

This approach stems from many beliefs within the empire's umbrella religion, which hold that music should capture the sound of a moment in time forever, rather than be something deliberately and methodically composed. This is the reason behind their unique way of making music.

Alchemy

Alchemy in Naphakadeizwe is not as developed as in other regions—at least not in the traditional sense of what is typically understood as alchemy. This is due to the strong social pressure inherent in its societal structure, which has led to it being set aside in favor of medicine, in order to save as many lives as possible (and thus contribute in the way society expects). As a result, Naphakadeizwe has become one of the most medically advanced regions in the world, even surpassing Ofir.

Architecture

As with many other aspects, it is impossible to speak of a standard architecture. At most, one can refer to multiple styles (one per ethnic group) and families of those styles within each group. The only common pattern shared among them is that, since most settlements are coastal, buildings are made of stone and use construction blocks that are not cubic or rectangular prisms, but pyramidal (not to be confused with building pyramidal structures).

Army

The army functions in a manner similar to other aspects of the country, such as the absence of a single capital. There is no unified high command, but rather a group of high-ranking leaders who, in times of conflict, gather to coordinate operations.

Due to the fluid social mobility, these leaders can be quickly replaced by others of similar capability from lower ranks in the chain of command. This ensures that the territory is never left without military leadership—either because at least one high command remains, or because all of them are rapidly replaced.

This form of military organization is called Ukusika (cutting or cloning), as it does not function like a tree—with a trunk from which branches emerge, as in other armies—but rather like an ecosystem populated by a single plant that reproduces through cuttings.

Military service is not mandatory, as the social structure encourages those with strong physical talent to enlist voluntarily, since it provides an efficient way to perform actions that benefit the community and thus advance socially.

Calendar

The empire follows a calendar that is six centuries behind the Nordling calendar.

It is a lunar calendar of 13 months, each lasting 28 days. Each month contains 7 weeks, and each week lasts 4 days.

Capital

There is no concept of a capital in the sense understood in other countries. Instead, there are several cities of importance in specific sectors that act as something loosely similar to a capital, but are neither so de jure nor de facto.

For example, Amanziumu, the central city, is not the capital of the empire, but rather the city of unity. This absence of a capital is due to two simple reasons. The first is to avoid internal conflict by not granting more importance to one city over the others, but instead distributing it. The second is to prevent a classic imperial collapse, as the government can quickly move from one city to another, enabling prolonged resistance and potentially wearing down an enemy in the event of such a collapse caused by conflict.

Clothing

Clothing varies greatly from one ethnic group to another. However, there are two recurring patterns. The first consists of very tight but extremely thin garments, designed both to prevent excessive sweating and to protect against mosquitoes and the diseases they carry, effectively acting as a second skin that mimics the functions of hippopotamus hide. The second consists of very loose-fitting clothing, similar in design to that of Barsa, which was adopted following contact between the two regions.ç

Coat of Arms

The coat of arms of the country consists of a traditional serrated oval shield displayed horizontally—the usual way such arms are presented—also resembling an eye, which represents vigilance against external enemies. The interior is white.

Within it, a sun and a moon are intertwined. Surrounding them are fifteen red dots. The white color represents the noble origins of the union, the intertwined sun and moon symbolize the different ethnic groups living in harmony, and the red dots represent the inter-vassal relationships among the various kingdoms that make up the territory, which gave rise to its network of interdependence.

Coming of Age

There is no fixed age at which a person is considered an adult. Adulthood is determined by the actions one has carried out in favor of the community and by the recognition of the family, the people of that community, the local government, or all three at once.

As a result, it varies greatly—not only from one ethnic group to another, but even between individual villages.

Currency

The main currency of Naphakadeizwe is the Ibhalansi (balance), which is made of ivory and has a spherical shape. This is due both to the scarcity of gold and of the animals that provide the material from which the currency is made, giving it significant value. This contrasts with Melukka, where such animals are abundant.

Anlbhalansi currency

In addition to this currency, in some border regions and ports, either foreign coins or coins made from less common metals—compared to silver, gold, copper, platinum, and similar materials—are used as secondary and tertiary currencies.

Daily Life

Daily life typically runs from late dawn until around midday (12–13 hours), followed by a 4-hour break that includes lunch and rest, before activity resumes from 17:00 until 20:00–21:00, when people have dinner and go to sleep. This schedule is shaped by the climate, diseases, and the presence of predators (both monsters and natural ones).

There are variations among different ethnic groups and professions, but these usually differ by only a few hours.

Diet

The diet consists largely of meat and fish. Meat is, for the most part, derived from hippopotamus. Due to the strong presence of the coast in daily life, fruit is consumed more frequently than vegetables, with vegetables often being replaced by various domesticated marine plants.

A notable example is an alcoholic beverage made from a subspecies of the algae *palmaria mollis*, known as *palmaria mollis amicabilis*, called Incasa-enomdla (curious taste or interesting flavor). Due to its different methods of preparation across the country, it can correspond—depending on the region—to anything from a spirit to something akin to beer or wine.

Discrimination

As such, xenophobia (at least internally—externally is another matter) does not exist, nor does speciesism. What does exist, essentially, is classism. Due to the system in place, those in the lowest positions of the social hierarchy are considered undesirable for various reasons—either because they are genuinely seen as such, or because they do not contribute sufficiently through their actions.

Non-humans

As in other parts of the world, non-humans exist in Naphakadeizwe. However, they do not occupy second-, third-, or even fourth-class citizen status as they do in Nordling lands. Instead, they exist between two extremes: either they are fully integrated—being considered one of the 100 ethnic groups—or they live on the fringes of the "*society of societies*" and are practically regarded as monsters to be hunted.

Two notable examples of both positions are the thokolosi, beings resembling a mix between elves, gnomes, dwarves, clabaters, and the leprechauns of the North—though not related to any of them—and the isiququmadevu, a creature related to the yeti of the Far North, which, despite being intelligent and more humanoid than its distant relative, is hunted due to communication difficulties.

In addition to these, other humanoids such as the abatwa, who are indeed related to gnomes, also exist. In fact, Zangvebarian scholars who have visited the North and interacted with gnomes believe them to be the result of a stable cross between gnomes and humans that, over the centuries, developed into its own distinct group.

The presence of vrans is also confirmed, who suffer a fate similar to that of the isiququmadevu and their nearly extinct northern relatives. These include the intulo, who are believed to be migrants from Nayar that moved further south when the local vran civilization began to collapse.

On the other hand, the existence of transformed non-humans—or rather, post-

humans—such as witchers, remains a mystery. Although Ofir once had its own witcher school due to its interactions with the empire and later the North—which led to the arrival of some individuals who gave rise to local variants—it is unknown whether any of them ventured further south and established anything there.

Racism

Racism, as such, does not exist, as previously mentioned in the sections on discrimination and people, due to the country's high diversity. At most, there exists a certain disdain toward albino individuals—not because of albinism itself, but because of the physical limitations it may entail (such as issues with skin, vision, etc.), which can make it harder for them to contribute to society.

It is important to note that this disdain does not affect only albino individuals, but also people with disabilities. However, it is temporary: if they demonstrate capability, it disappears.

Education

Education is public and semi-free. It is delivered in different ways depending on the ethnic group. Its semi-free nature comes from the requirement that one must contribute something unique to the institution in order to be admitted as a student. If this is not possible, money is accepted as a temporary substitute for entry. However, this does not guarantee permanence: if a student does not demonstrate their value as such and fails to continue contributing unique input, they are, as in other aspects of society, downgraded and consequently receive less attention.

If the situation is not corrected quickly, the student is expelled. This can bring even more severe consequences for the individual within their family and, later, their position in society.

Family

The family structure is similar to that of many other countries. In this case, the nuclear family extends up to cousins. However, it has an important difference: due to its flexible social structure—and given that families are the core of all social organization—this flexibility is also reflected within the family.

From a certain age (adolescence), if a child carries out actions that benefit the

family, they may replace the patriarch or matriarch. The same applies to other members in different positions within the family hierarchy. As a result, generational succession is not a fixed moment in time, but rather something fluid and, to some extent, constant.

Government

Its form of government could be described as an oligarchic dynamiscracy, with certain "*democratic*" elements here and there. It consists of the upper classes of the different ethnic groups gathering, discussing matters, and then organizing an auction in which they present several candidates for each ethnicity.

In this process, one candidate per ethnicity, after explaining their plans, is literally auctioned and bought by a member of the upper classes—the one most interested in their agenda. This process is repeated until there is one purchased representative for each ethnicity of the empire, selected from among all those presented. These individuals then form a kind of "*imperial council.*"

The process is then repeated among them, but this time selecting only one candidate from the group, who becomes the equivalent of an "*emperor/empress*." the so-called umbusi. This ruler is then tasked with overseeing and balancing the various interests, ensuring that they do not conflict with one another.

As for the money collected, it is later used both to fund the state treasury and to establish a limit on the emperor/empress's power. This limit takes the form of a variable sum of money that increases each year of the rule of this emperor/empress. In order to remove the emperor from power, the members of the council must reach an agreement and pay the sum to kick it out from power. This is usually achieved by presenting evidence of the emperor's failure in governance to the other members as well convincing them to contribute to payment of the required sum.

This system is designed so that such "*removals*" can finance future "*elections*" and allow the deposed emperor/empress a period of rest, with the broader intention of preventing rebellions, secessions, and similar destabilizing events.

Hairstyles

Given that this is a society with highly fluid social mobility, it is quite difficult to determine a person's profession based on their clothing. Tattoos are also not

useful for this purpose, as the actions carried out by an individual are varied and not always tied to their profession.

To address this, hairstyles were developed as a way to indicate one's occupation. Each profession has a distinct type of hairstyle, to which two additional elements are added depending on gender: beards (including mustaches) and makeup.

This allows, for example, one to identify a man as a sailor—and, based on specific variations of his beard/mustache, as a ship captain—or a woman as a soldier and, through her makeup, as a commander of an army.

As for hair itself, its color typically ranges from beach-blonde to dark shades, including all intermediate tones, with beach-blonde being particularly common among certain groups due to the importance of coastal life.

Jewelry

Jewelry (at least non-metallic pieces), unlike in other places, serves an opposite function in this country, complementing tattoos. That is, it acts as an indicator of a person's mistakes and how these affected their community. The intricacy of the patterns on a non-metalic jewel reflects the severity of those mistakes.

These are non-metallic items because they wear down relatively quickly, effectively symbolizing how mistakes can fade over time through personal effort.

Language

Many languages are spoken in Naphakadeizwe, with none of the languages of the 100 ethnic groups holding significant dominance over the others due to the population distribution. In addition, many commercial creoles and pidgins are used as secondary and tertiary languages.

The only language that stands out is an artificial mass-creole (that is, a creole that has received influences from the various languages of the ethnic groups—hence its "*massive*" nature, as there are around 100—across different aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, writing, and even alphabet), called Ukuxhumana (communication).

It was created by Thembile Mthiyane, one of the first and most renowned linguists of the country, known beyond the creation of the mass-creole for compiling dictionaries of each language in the territory.

Prior to this, the Naphaomutu Language ("Language of the Imperial People")

was emerging as the most widely used, but this process was halted after the approval, creation, and implementation of Ukuxhumana.

As a result, most inhabitants of the territory speak at least three languages fluently: their native language, Ukuxhumana, and a creole or pidgin.

Magic

Magic, for its part, is taught in an ukunyakaza-isikole (school of movement), where its equivalents to mages are trained to draw from the Ley Lines that run through the world (as any magic user on the planet does) and then channel and use magic through a unique casting method.

Rather than relying on concentration (as in the North and Nilfgaard), trance (as with priests), emotions (as with witches or warlocks), muscle memory (as with witchers and their Signs), or altering brainwave patterns through chanting (as with the avchiragchs of Haakland), they instead alter the entire physical state of their body through a combination of dance and martial art.

As a result, depending on which part of the body is most physically exhausted at a given moment—combined with the sequence of prior movements—they are able to cast one spell or another. The more body parts are fatigued, the more complex the movements, and the greater the physical changes in the body, the more accumulated energy is used, leading to a different state and thus enabling more complex spells.

These mage equivalents are known as izimpawu-umenzi (makers of symbols). The most well-known place of training is Indlu-yeeMilo (House of Forms).

The only disadvantage compared to traditional mages is that complex spells are more limited, as they require significantly more physical effort than simply reaching a certain level of concentration combined with precise gestures and diction.

Marriage

Almost any type of marriage can be found in Naphakadeizwe. The difference compared to other countries lies in its family and social structure, which requires that such unions be in constant "*maintenance.*" As a result, monogamy becomes the most common form, as it is the easiest to sustain through actions that benefit the whole—that is, both members of this standard type of partnership.

Mentality

The average mindset could be described as that of an elastic spring: open, yet at the same time inflexible. It is also collective-individualistic, meaning that actions are carried out for the collective because they benefit the individual, rather than the other way around. Additionally, it is fractal, meaning it presents variations that retain these core characteristics in structure, but differ significantly depending on the life stage a person is in at a given moment.

It should also be noted that social values, due to both the social structure and this fractal mindset, are not fixed but exist along a gradient spectrum that allows for adaptability and survival. A person's position within this spectrum varies depending on the time period, their social position, age, education, and immediate, local, and broader environmental circumstances. However—and this is important—they never fall outside of this spectrum.

As a result, amorality does not exist as a concept, and freedom, while considerable, is limited by the social structure and this gradient-based system of values.

Pets

In addition to the woolly hippopotamus, the locals have domesticated chaus (*felis chaus*), more specifically the coastal subspecies (*felis chaus oraus*), to help regulate the problem posed by small mammals in early coastal settlements.

Unlike their domestic cat relatives, these do not appear to accumulate magical energy for unknown reasons, and therefore do not typically hiss at mutants. In fact, they behave in the opposite way.

Religion

There is no single unified religion in the country, due to its ethnic diversity. However, as a result of various factors—along with a historical one—there exists what is known as a "*religion of religions,*" or umbrella religion as mentioned before.

That is, a set of distinct belief systems without apparent contradictions between them, all connected by a single divinity. This divinity holds different degrees of importance depending on the belief in question, with those degrees forming part of the cycle of the divinity itself.

All of this stems from the religious structuring carried out in the mid-11th century by the umbusi Sithembile Dlamini, as previously mentioned.

Society

It is a society divided into estates, but with a notable difference compared to other nearby and distant societies: its fluidity, something that remains despite variations depending on the ethnic group. This allows anyone, through effort, to reach any position. This has its origins partly in its time as nomadic tribes, where the loss of people due to monsters forced individuals from other estates to replace those who had been lost.

It should be noted that this does not prevent the existence of dynasties—families that have remained in the same profession or similar roles for generations—as long as the child maintains or surpasses the parent. This creates a set of cultures and a broader macroculture in which social pressure is very high.

Social Structure

The social structure varies depending on the region (and therefore the ethnicity) being observed, but in many cases it is meritocratic-communal or adjacent to a meritocratic-communal system. In this system, individuals rise in the social hierarchy by carrying out actions for the benefit of the community—the more significant or positively impactful the action is for the collective, the greater the ascent—receiving material wealth, land, and other rewards in the process.

Conversely, individuals descend in status if they fail in carrying out such actions. This creates a dynamic in which a person may have once been part of the government and mistreated a peasant, only to later become that same peasant themselves.

This is the reason why the government remains oligarchic and has not been replaced. The oligarchs, in a sense, maintain their positions by continuously proving their value through actions that benefit the community, forcing them to include this factor as part of their interests if they wish to avoid decline.

Symbols

There are as many sacred symbols as there are ethnic groups, due to the umbrella religion and the cultural variations each group had prior to their

unification. However, there is one symbol that, like many other elements, is repeated due to its domestication and importance: the hippopotamus.

In fact, most religious sites are constructed either in the shape of a hippopotamus's mouth facing forward or upward, depending on whether, according to their beliefs, they seek greater protection from material threats or from malevolent divine forces.

Justice

Justice operates in a simple manner: forced descent in the social hierarchy to very low positions. This differs from a natural decline due to failure, where one simply drops slightly. The more severe the crime, the further one falls in comparison to their previous status. In extreme cases, such as serial killers, this means being placed in such a low position that committing those crimes again becomes impossible, as they are heavily controlled and utilized by those above them.

This system dates back to the time when the first humans appeared in that region of the world, when being at the lowest level of society implied a higher likelihood of being devoured by monsters.

Slavery

Slavery, as such, does not exist in Naphakadeizwe. What does exist is temerarism —that is, the practice of forcing enemies, criminals, and other undesirable individuals to carry out great deeds (of a daring nature, as the name suggests) in order to avoid execution and instead be absorbed or reintegrated into the "*society of societies*" that makes up the empire.

There are variations depending on the ethnic group, but the core principle generally remains the same.

Tattoos

Tattoos are common in the country, with design variations among the different ethnic groups. However, they are not used to celebrate personal achievements, religious milestones, or similar purposes, but rather as reminders of actions carried out for the community.

Depending on the importance and impact of such actions, the tattoo will be of

one type or another. The ink and its color indicate a range from lesser to greater importance, while scarification—through its different forms (manual or by burning)—indicates a range from very important to legendary.

The location of the tattoo on the body also serves to indicate the type of action performed, and its size reflects how complex it was.

Regarding scarification, it should be noted that it has caused cultural misunderstandings with foreigners, as locals may interpret a natural scar on a person as evidence of a significant action carried out for their community in their homeland.

Transport

Land transport is carried out not through the use of horses or similar animals (as they do not exist), but through the use of woolly hippopotamuses, also known as cleaner hippopotamuses (*hippopotamus silvanicus*), a subspecies of the animal that is larger, even more adapted to terrestrial life, and capable of clearing parts of the jungle with its teeth in order to feed—thus creating natural paths.

This species was domesticated by the different groups, originally as a means of defense against monsters due to its powerful jaws, but eventually evolved to fulfill other functions. As such, it acts as a multiple analogue to the dog, horse, cow, and pig found in other regions.

An elderly woolly hippopotamus creating a

Women's Rights and Sexual Minorities

There is no concept of inequality for women or sexual minorities within the territory, for the simple reason that what matters is what one contributes, not one's gender or sexual preferences. This applies even to individuals with gender dysphoria, despite the fact that the complex alchemical process used to naturally change one's sex—present in Núchtetl and employed by the only sorceress trained in Ban Ard, Bronwyn Deadeye—does not exist here.

Other Cultural Traits

The concept of a pirate does not exist within the culture. This is due to

both the prevailing mindset and social structure, as well as historical factors, which prevent highly individualistic roles such as pirates from emerging.

What does exist, however, is something akin to a privateer: the umwezeziem, a title derived from the phrase umqoqi-wezinto-ezivela-emikhunjini (literally, *collector of things from ships*). These are individuals of very low social status who, in order to rise, engage in attacking foreign vessels, taking their goods, and redistributing them to underserved areas within the country.

The key difference from privateers is that they do not require a letter of marque, as they do not serve the state, but rather their people.

The concept of a knight, paladin, or similar figure does not exist either. The closest equivalent—though still quite distant—are individuals whose positive actions consist in encouraging others to carry out positive actions for their community beyond those already expected by the social structure.

These individuals are called umfunikuhle (literally, *seekers of the good*). They are the closest thing to wandering knights or paladins: they carry armor and weapons, often decorated with hippopotamus motifs.

However, unlike such figures, they do not directly perform the good deed themselves. Rather, as stated, they act as the catalyst that inspires positive action, not its direct cause. They only intervene fully if doing so will ultimately lead to greater collective benefit.

For example, instead of distributing food themselves, they would act in a way that leads people to share resources more equitably, improving the quality of life for all. In a more classic scenario, they would not slay the dragon—they would instead guide the princess so that she can defeat it and escape.

Demographics

The empire has a high demographic concentration, with its population largely clustered in coastal cities due to their greater security, totaling around 10 million people. These are divided among approximately 100 ethnic groups, most of which have a similar demographic weight, both due to the structure of the government and the aforementioned coastal concentration. Each group typically consists of around 100,000 members.

People

A Malausiant uWoman

Naphakadeizwe is as diverse as Melukka, Ofir, the Golden Islands, or the complex region of Bia Thin, making it impossible to define an "*average*" Naphakadeizian. Despite this, there are certain shared traits, such as kinky hair, eyes in shades of brown ranging from chocolate to caramel, then to bronze and finally coconut, with all intermediate tones represented, and skin tones ranging between brown and cedar, again with all intermediate variations present.

However, their morphology is highly varied. There are peoples with slanted eyes, though not almond-shaped; individuals who exhibit melanism similar to that of the Aen Taoide elves without being related to them, possessing a charcoal tone; people of small stature without being dwarves or having non-human ancestry; very tall and slender individuals; people who could pass for certain Ofiri or Zerrikanian groups if not for their slightly darker complexion; and so on.

Economy

Naphakadeizwe is primarily an agricultural, livestock, and fishing power. As such, the primary sector is the most important. This is due—at least in the case of agriculture and livestock—to its soil, which is extremely fertile thanks to its climate and ecology. The dense tropical jungles enrich the soil through their undergrowth, allowing almost anything to grow there, while also acting as a barrier against sea salinity without requiring movement far inland.

It is also a naval power, so the secondary sector holds some weight, though it does not compare to the primary sector. In terms of long-distance travel, however, its ships are significantly outmatched by those of Zangvebar. Its advantage lies in the way its vessels are built, allowing for longer food preservation.

Related to both sectors, it is also an arms-producing power—not comparable to Zerrikania, Temeria, or Nilfgaard, but still notable—exporting weapons, armor, and equipment to neighboring regions and occasionally to Barsa. It is particularly distinguished by its focus on defensive-offensive equipment rather than purely offensive tools, both on small and large scales. Notable examples

include the already mentioned serrated shields, as well hair-trappers (a type of sword that splits into two prongs with inward-angled tips, allowing for grappling), and knockers (a hybrid between a mace, a sword, and an axe).

The tertiary sector, on the other hand, is weak, as they prefer to visit rather than be visited.

From other countries, they mainly import jewelry, fabrics, and materials they lack but require for various purposes, such as certain types of stone or glass—the latter being difficult to produce due to their rocky beaches, making it cheaper to import than to manufacture locally—among other goods.

Flora and Fauna

The flora is typical of what can be found in southern Zangvebar, and therefore characteristic of a humid tropical climate and dense jungle, with little variation in that regard. However, some plant species are endemic, having developed different ways of processing nutrients in their evolutionary search for efficiency. This has resulted in variations in leaf coloration, giving parts of the jungle a multicolored appearance.

In addition to these endemic plants, giant fungi stand out, appearing sporadically. Due to the evolutionary pressure of the jungle environment, they have grown to enormous sizes, with some nearly reaching the height of certain tree species.

As for fauna, beyond the chaus and woolly hippopotamuses, there are numerous para-venomous pseudo-amphibians (a midpoint between frogs and reptiles, whose venom enhances physical performance rather than harming like typical toxins, though it can lead to collapse due to overstimulation), terrestrial crustaceans, ocelots, margays, various types of hominids (mostly small), many members of the Ramphastidae family—toucans—and, lastly among birds, toucan-barbets.

In rivers, one can find pink dolphins and inkemba-entantayos (floating swords), essentially tropical narwhals.

Geography

The geography of the empire is as diverse as its people. However, the most common landscape (around 55%) consists of vast basins surrounded by

mountains. Through these basins flow inland rivers that empty into the sea and tend to overflow during rainy seasons.

The formation of these basins is not due to meteorite craters (as in the case of the Amapaba Basin, which originated from a meteorite impact), but rather from the collapse of massive volcanoes in on themselves, followed by the displacement of rock and erosion caused by the aforementioned rivers. These basins are usually home to the country's most unique flora and fauna.

Most settlements are located either at river mouths, on the mountains faces facing the coast, or directly along the coastline, following a pattern that decreases in density as one moves inland.

This explains the need to import certain materials, reinforces the logic behind coastal settlements, and—alongside other more important factors—helped make the terrain of Amapaba known prior to the attempted invasion.

Naming Conventions

The way people are named in this country varies depending on territory, culture, and language. Some naming traditions are based on what the mother first saw, what first sparked the baby's curiosity, the circumstances of birth, the baby's first word, expectations for the child, and many other factors.

Names are usually composed of two parts (though this is not always the case), combining some of the elements mentioned above. To these, a connector—such as lë, kė, zké, or similar—is typically added, followed by the full names of the parents. This forms the formal name, while in everyday life only the two main names are used.

Examples of Male Names

Amile, Bafana, Beya, Bhekani, Bheki, Bhekizifundiswa, Bhekizizwe, Bhekumbuso, Bonginkosi, Buyisiwe, Cetshwayo, Chaka, Eethaba, Elifasi, Fanyana, Gatsha, Gazini, Gedleyihlekisa, Ghakarhi, Ibubesi, Iqaqa, Khanya, Khayalethu, Langalibalele, Linda, Lindile, Lindokuhle, Lunga, Lungani, Lwazi, Malusi, Mangaliso, Mbulelo, Mduduzi, Menzi, Meshindi, Mfan'bomvu, Mhlengi.

Examples of Female Names

Bekebeke, Benesha, Bhekisisa, Bhekithemba, Bongiwe, Cashile, Dela, Didiza, Duduzile, Ekuseni, Enanela, Esasa, Esihle, Ethuka, Ethulo, Ethwasa, Gabisile, Gagasi, Gugu, Hlobisile, Ijuba, Ingqondo, Inyonic, Isisa, Izula, Jabu, Khangezile, Khanyisile, Khanyokulhe, Khethiwe, Khethukuthula, Khule, Khulekani, Khululiwe, Lakiwe, Leleti, Lindelani, Liyana, Londiwe, Mandisa, Mbalienhle, Mhambi, Mlilo.

Examples of Gender-Neutral Names

Abafile, Amandla, Amazie, Anele, Aphelele, Esihle, Ikusasa, Imbasa, Kgabu, Khwezi, Kwanele, Lihle, Lukhona, Lungelo, Luyanda, Manelesi, Mesuli, Mnotho, Nkosingimele, Nkuli, Olwethu, Owethu, Phila, Sabelwe, Sanele, Simdingile, Simphiwe, Sindisa, Siphesihle, Sizakele, Thandokuhle, Wandile, Yayo, Yibanathi, Zethu, Ziphozonke.

Notable Locations

For the full list of known Naphakdeizwe locations see Category: Naphakdeizwe locations

Academies

- Indlu-yeeMilo

Basins

- Isitsha-Somlilo
- Isiziba-Somdaka
- Umfula-Ophuphumayo

Cities

- Amanziumu
- Eziweni-Elimhlophe
- Itheku-Lomoya
- KwaMlomowamanzi

False Cities

- Buywawa

Mountain Ranges

- Ukhahlamba-Lwemvula

Outposts

- KwaGwala

Towns

- Litshe-Lelanga
- Zalolwandle

Valleys

- KwaVukile

Villages

- Intaba-Zenkungu

Waterfalls

- Izimpophoma-Zegazi

Notable Organizations

For the full list of known Naphakdeizan Organizations see Category: Naphakdeizan Organizations

Guilds

- Abenzi beeNdlela zaManzi

Notable People

For the full list of known Naphakdeizans see Category: Naphakdeizans

Ethnic Groups

- Langantu
- Lwaziantu
- Malusiantu
- Mhlengiomotu
- Menziomotu
- Naphaomotu
- Umzinabantu

Designers

- Cabanga Myeni

Sailors

- Nomasonto Khathi

Umbusis

- Mandlenkosi Gwala
- Nhlanhlayakhe Ndlela
- Tulani Buthelezi

Notes

The real-world analogue inspiration has been very minimal, with the setting having been developed largely independently. The only significant influence lies in the language. However, it is still worth keeping this real-world analogue inspiration in mind for anyone who wishes to further develop elements from this setting.

Trivia

- The original inspiration for the country was Zulu. However, during the writing process, it was decided to evolve it into a broader Bantu[W] superpower, as there are already too many Zulu analogues in fantasy to the point of cliché. This is the reason behind the presence of diverse ethnic

groups and its history.

- The administrative division is a counter-inspiration to the Septim Empire in The Elder Scrolls Videogame Series. According to the author, it should have been organized in a way similar to what is described in that section, rather than as a "*generic fantasy Ancient Rome 101010202*."
- The magic system is counter-inspired by the tabletop role-playing games *Mage: The Ascension* and *Mage: The Awakening* from the World of Darkness and Chronicles of Darkness lines respectively, as well as Dungeons & Dragons. The goal is to demonstrate that different methods of using magic can exist under a single system (in this case, Ley Lines), rather than justifying everything through "*reality manipulation*" (an interesting concept, but one that can lead to vague writing), as in the Mage games, or falling into constant contradictions or classes that are merely reskins of others, as in D&D.
- The magical dance-martial art is a clear reference to Capoeira[W], as the Far South was designed to incorporate Middle Eastern, South American, and African themes.
- The Naphakadeizian–Barsameni ethnic group is a narrative seed intended to allow the development of a new culture (or series of cultures) inspired by the Horn of Africa[W]—more specifically Somalia[W]—with additional influences from Afro-American ethnonationalist movements (such as the Republic of New Afrika[W]) and Jamaica[W].
- One of the main goals behind this country—beyond organically expanding The Witcher—was to create a civilization that, while inspired by real ones, would feel "*post-human medieval,*" in order to demonstrate that fantasy does not need to closely mirror the real world nor become excessively alien (as in the case of *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind*).
    - The primary driving force behind this approach (though not a direct inspiration) is *Inversions*[W], from the Culture series by Iain M. Banks[W], which takes place on a medieval, pan-human alien planet within a science fiction setting. Hence the title of the novel, as it represents an inversion of classical medieval fantasy and science fiction.
- The giant fungi described in the flora and fauna section are another counter-inspiration. In this case, they are a response to *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind*, as in a desert environment like that region of Tamriel, it would not be logically possible for them to grow to such enormous sizes. In contrast, in a jungle, this becomes far more plausible.

- One of the (fictional) inspirations for Naphakadeizwe has been the Duadri, from the large-scale mod project Project Tamriel, which aims to recreate the entirety of Tamriel for *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind* and is considered by many to be practically paracanon, given its two decades of development (that is, unofficial canon or highly developed fanon within this fantasy universe).
- The name of the Umzinabantu comes from the Xhosa phrase *UMkhuseli oZinzileyo Abantu*, which—if the translation is correct—would mean "*Resolute Protector People*." The name is a light counter-inspiration to Wyll from Baldur's Gate 3. In the author's opinion, the character could have had a more interesting background, rather than being a "*generic warlock with X skin color for 'inclusion' 101010202*," by originating not just from somewhere beyond the Sword Coast, but even from an Afro-medieval world—taking advantage of the interplanar capabilities of illithid ships—instead of what is perceived as tokenistic representation.
- The high prevalence of beach-blonde hair is based both on the natural phenomenon that causes it and on some of the color palettes used in Afrofuturism[W].
- The absence of a capital is inspired by the three-capital system of South Africa[W].
- The raids of the Aen Fomuire are inspired by modern Somali pirates, the Sea Peoples[W], and the Ikkan from Project Tamriel.
- The independent islands of Naphakadeizwe are a subtle reference to the independence movement present on Annobón[W], off the coast of Equatorial Guinea[W].
- Buywawa is a reference to the city of Bulawayo[W], the royal capital during the reign of Shaka Zulu[W], founder of the Zulu Empire. It was created following a similar logic to that used by Andrzej Sapkowski when naming Zangvebar—that is, drawing from Zanzibar.
- The umfunikuhle are, in a sense, a reinterpretation of a concept such as the morality police[W] in Iran.

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breezewiki

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